

CHRIST IN YOU

“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

Someone said: “It is hard to show that you are clever and Jesus is wonderful at the same time”. Think about it! The preacher’s prayer ought to be: “I do not ask that men should sing my praise, or flaming headlines spread my name abroad, I only ask that as I voice the message, hearts may find God”. There is something suspicious about an evangelistic campaign that has the name of the evangelist in bigger print than that of Jesus.

As you know, God is a Spirit, and no man has seen Him at any time (Jn. 1:18). Too often what we “see” becomes the focus of our worship. This is the essence of idolatry. Remember the bronze serpent that Moses made in the wilderness. (Nu. 21:8). Everyone who was bitten by a deadly viper and looked on that serpent was healed. Jesus made reference to this and said that just as the serpent was lifted up He also would be lifted up (Jn. 3:14). Unfortunately, the people forgot about God and burned incense to that bronze snake. They called it “Nehushtan”. Good King Hezekiah broke that bronze serpent into pieces because it had become an idol.

Since eloquent and popular speakers can be seen, and God cannot, there is ever the danger that those who see and listen to these preachers will focus on them more than on God. King Herod, for example, delivered such an eloquent public address that the people shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not a man”. (Acts 12:22). Because Herod did not give God the glory, immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down and he died. God is a jealous God and no one is before Him!

While our conversation is to be full of grace and seasoned with salt (Col. 4:6), the ultimate power of the Gospel is still not in our presentation. The Word of God itself is alive and powerful (Heb. 4:12). Paul wrote to the Corinthians: **“When I came to you brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power” (I Cor. 2:1 - 5).**

Do you see the difference?

There is an old joke about the guest speaker who came to preach and only three people showed up. “Did you tell them I was coming” he asked the local preacher? He answered: “No - but it looks like the word got around anyhow”.

Yes! Lots of people show up to listen to a famous and eloquent speaker. Hardly anyone shows up to listen to an unknown speaker who is not eloquent. How sad it is when “personalities” take precedence over the “power of God”!

The following words are found on St. Patrick’s Breastplate.

*“Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.”*

Don’t ever forget - CHRIST IN YOU IS THE HOPE OF GLORY!